

alcohol by employees. He notes that only two preceding reports are available in this field. The first of these was a chapter in the twelfth annual report of the Commissioner of Labor for the year 1897-8 on the economic aspects of the liquor problem. Of 6976 employers of about one and three-fourths millions of people, 5363 reported the use of alcohol was considered in the engagement of new employees. In some of these establishments, no user of alcoholic beverages was employed. Out of 1794 plants, for the sake of prevention of accidents, and because of responsibility of the position, alcohol was barred. Of 7025 firms, 3527 had some regulation regarding alcohol: 855 forbade its use in working hours: 696 forbade its use at any time: 692 that in certain occupations its use was forbidden on duty, and in certain occupations 1,284 forbade its use at any time.

The second study noted by Fleisher was made within the year by the Temperance Society of the Episcopal Church, among the iron and steel companies of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois and West Virginia. The data covered 140 companies, many with more than one plant. Of the 120 companies answering, 83 discriminated against the use of alcohol in employing and promoting employees, and ten forbade its use by employees at any time. The first study was conducted twenty years ago and the second covered a section of one industry only.

Fleisher received data from ten railroads employing a total of 400,000 men, all of which regulate the use of alcohol in some fashion, and typically according to this notice: "The use of intoxicants by employees subject to call is prohibited. Their use by any employee or the frequenting of places where they are sold, is sufficient cause for dismissal." It is interesting here to note that the Saxon State Railways have instructed their officials to employ only non-drinkers. Swiss and Dutch railways are following in the same path. Says the Railroad Gazette, "American railroads have become one of the greatest and most effective temperance organizations in existence." Six public service corporations employing a total of 200,000 men seemed not to have taken the matter up for definite pronouncement but the conclusion is drawn that intoxication on duty would meet with dismissal, that use of alcohol is forbidden in working hours, and that if its use interferes with the duties of an employee he would be dismissed.

Returns from large department stores, retail stores and mail order houses employing in all some 44,000 persons, show that in general drinkers are not allowed to remain in their employ. So the list goes on through the employees of sales organizations, steel companies, mining companies, manufacturers of various products, and a miscellaneous group of minor industries. Fleisher summarizes his results of the investigation of the employers of 750,000 persons, constituting 4 per cent. of those engaged in trade, transportation, and the mechanical and manufacturing industries of the United States, by stating that these employers forbid alcohol in their plants, often consider its use at

all as of serious importance in the employment and promotion of employees, and that in such industries as transportation, alcohol is forbidden to employees at any time. This latter stand is being approached by other lines of industry.

Fleisher further points out that this great trend against the use of alcohol is a result, not of any knowledge of its physiological action or of statistics as to its use, but simply of the fact that the non-drinker is found to be the best employee. Space forbids mention of the increasing number of trade organizations both among employers and employees which are opposed to the use of alcohol, on the basis of its proved results from the economic standpoint.

An exhaustive discussion is not possible because of space limits. The importance of the subject, however, merits profound thought from every physician as to the actual conditions obtaining in the economic realm as affected by alcohol. Nor should undue weight be put on the alleged freedom of the individual to select whatever narcotic he desires. When that selection leads to conflict with public and private health interests, to interference with full war efficiency, to economic damage to the country, and to the whole train of post-alcoholic evils which are at last being correctly evaluated, it should no more be permitted than should the freedom of the individual to debauch himself with cocaine. Of the two, alcohol bulks larger and the remedy should be at least as sweeping.

NEW MEDICAL PRACTICE LAW.

The new amendments to the state medical practice law went into effect on July 27, 1917. Two provisions require special comment. The first is relative to the employment of interpreters or translators for candidates for medical examination. The law provides that "the board (of medical examiners) in its discretion upon the submission of satisfactory proof from the applicant that he is unable to meet the requirements of the examination in the English language, may allow the use of an interpreter either to be present in the examination room or to thereafter interpret and transcribe the answers of the applicant." The interpreter is to be selected by the board.

In another column are published the rules adopted by the board under this provision. These rules would seem adequately to cover the situation, granting, of course, that the use of interpreters is desirable under any circumstances, of which we are by no means convinced.

The second provision requiring comment is in connection with Section 12½ of the amendments appertaining to the licensing of osteopaths as "physicians and surgeons," provided they meet certain preliminary requirements, or have practiced their profession for at least four years, and pass an examination which may be "oral, practical or clinical." The important word is the "or." It is not known to us why the law does not provide for an examination which should be "oral, practical and clinical." The result as it stands, is that a purely

perfunctory oral examination may be sufficient to secure a physicians' and surgeons' license for osteopaths who are otherwise eligible.

The first examination of osteopaths under this new provision will be held in Los Angeles early in October. The medical profession of the state will be keenly interested to see what type of examination is given and whether the Board of Medical Examiners allows the language of the law as heretofore stated to prove a loop-hole. The JOURNAL will publish the results of the examination and other information concerning it as it is realized that this is of no small interest and importance to the medical profession of the entire state. The Board of Medical Examiners is commissioned with the onerous and responsible duty of maintaining and promoting the standard of medical practice in the state. To that end they have the cordial interest and should merit the constant support of the medical profession. It is to be hoped that this coming examination will set another high standard, and will establish a clear policy of adequate and thorough examination. We shall have more to say at a later time regarding the character of efficient medical examinations.

ACCEPTANCE OF ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

All papers read before the State Society are the property of the State Medical Journal, unless by action of the Publication Committee they are not found available for publication. The Publication Committee may reject any paper submitted, whether it be from a State Society meeting, a county society meeting, or written solely for publication. The editor may accept any paper he sees fit but can not reject, this latter being a function of the Committee. It is greatly to be hoped that no paper will be allowed to be presented at the State Society meeting at Del Monte next April, unless the original copy of it is already in the hands of the secretary of the section before which it is read. Many state papers from the last meeting have not yet been submitted for publication. No special effort will be made this year to gather in the missing papers because of the unduly crowded space in the JOURNAL. In this connection, it is hoped that the larger size of the JOURNAL may be continued long enough to relieve the congestion and eventually become permanent.

In another column will be found a notice from the Committee on Scientific Work making certain suggestions for the preparation of papers for the next annual meeting. These suggestions are good and timely, and the Committee will do well to present the matter again and at more length. The same suggestions to a certain extent are applicable to all papers presented for publication in the JOURNAL. While it is not the policy of the Publication Committee to make the JOURNAL ultra-scientific, or to insist on a preference for research and new results in manuscripts submitted, still it is felt that the JOURNAL space is too valuable to be devoted to mere text book descriptions which can be better read in a standard volume.

Papers should be condensed by leaving out every

word, phrase and paragraph which does not contribute constructively to the argument developed. Every sentence must be clear and express a definite idea. Spelling and punctuation must receive proper attention. Typing, margins, double spacing, paragraphing,—all must be clear and carefully worked over before submitting. The cardinal sin of the medical writer is verbosity. Avoid it. Many excellent papers have been returned for slight alteration or modification which would considerably enhance their value and would insure their acceptance for publication. All references should be numbered serially through the paper, and give only,—author, journal, year, volume, page. Above all, the medical writer should clothe his argument, as Thomas Hobbes advised, in "perspicuous words by exact definition first purged and snuffed from ambiguity."

The scope of papers accepted is broad and is designed to furnish practical instruction to the general practitioner, especially in smaller towns, as well as to men specializing in cities.

THE UNHYGIENIC COLON.

The physiological and bacteriological storms which have raged of late years about the colon would of themselves give importance to that organ even if the first reflection did not show conclusively that there is some occasion for regarding it as Kellogg, in the preface of his book on "Colon Hygiene," says: "An incubating chamber of poison forming germs, a hold of unclean and hateful parasites, a veritable Pandora's box of disease and degeneracy." From absolute ablation as a panacea, to a complete disregard of the organ unless it shall not have emptied itself in a week or more, there is a whole range of phenomena which may appear as symptoms and of remedial agents which may be used with effective results.

It is worth while for the physician to remember that the colon is not unhygienic merely because of the presence of bacteria. It is becoming known that processes of digestion depend, to an as yet unknown degree, on the action of bacterial enzymes directly on foods. Metchnikoff's endeavor to replace the abnormal bacterial inhabitants of the colon with beneficent organisms is in line with the present trend of investigation.

But while bacteria are a necessary factor in the physiology of the colon, they are also the cause of abnormal conditions through products which may cause, or predispose to disease. Here is the place filled with fads and fancies, some scientific and more pure fancy. All of the internal baths, and colon irrigators on the market today but voice this truth. A half assimilated idea is often worse than none at all, and a pseudo-scientific sensational exploitation of the idea that the colon must be cleansed at any cost, and that this can actually be done, is usually an accompaniment simply of a commercial desire to trade on the authority of science for money making purposes.

There is a legitimate field for colon hygiene, however, and this too must not be forgotten by the practitioner. Kellogg discusses in general from a